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Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 SAJ-01 TRSE-00 /056 W
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INFO USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HONG KONG 00963

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PINR CH
SUBJECT: THE UA REGIME'S RECORD: LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE AND POLICY COMMITMENT

REF: (A) 1976 HK 14015 (B) 1976 HK 13712 (C) 1976 HK 13014

INTRODUCTION: WITHIN OUR FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS OF THE HUA REGIME AND ITS OPERATIONS (REFTEL C), WE RECENTLY HAVE EXAMINED THE PROCESS OF LEGITIMIZATION OF THE NEW CHINESE REGIME (REFTEL B) AND THE CONSTRAINTS WHICH HAMPER THE HUA LEADERSHIP IN SETTING POLICY (REFTEL A). THIS MESSAGE DISCUSSES THE POLICIES AND COMMITMENTS WITH WHICH THE REGIME HAS CAUSED ITSELF TO BE ASSOCIATED AND ITS PROGRESS TO DATE IN MOVING BEYOND THE PURGE OF THE "GANG OF FOUR."

THE HUA REGIME HAS BUILT ITSELF ON THE PILLARS OF A
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DIRECT BLESSING FROM CHAIRMAN MAO AND ITS DECISIVE ACTION TO "PREVENT" THE "GANG" FROM OVERTURNING THE CHINESE REVOLUTION. WHILE OBTAINING A RELATIVELY WIDE RANGE OF POPULAR SUPPORT FROM THIS, THE REGIME FACES UNCERTAINTY AMONG MIDDLE-LEVEL AND LOWER-RANKING CADRES, MANY OF WHOM CAME UP UNDER THE LABEL OF THE "YOUNG" IN MAO'S THREE-IN-ONE LEADERSHIP COMBINATION OF OLD, MIDDLE-AGED, AND YOUNG AND WHO LOOKED

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TOWARD THE PURGED PROPONENTS OF CULTURAL REVOLUTION IDEALS
AS THEIR MENTORS. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE IS A RESIDUAL
GROUP OF "SUPPORTERS" AND "FOLLOWERS" WHO REMAIN TO BE RE-
MOVED OR IDEOLOGICALLY REMOLDED WITHIN BOTH THE PARTY AND THE
BUREAUCRACY.

THE REGIME'S CONCERNS ABOUT THESE PEOPLE AND THE RECURRENT
PROBLEMS OF FACTINALISM IN CHINA HAVE CONFOUNDED EFFORTS TO
MOVE SWIFTLY BEYOND THE PURGE OF THE "GANG OF FOUR" AND HAMPERED
ITS ABILITIES TO MOVE AHEAD WITH THE RESOLUTION OF ISSUES.
MORE IMPORTANLY, THE RELATIVE STRENGTHS AND ALLEGIANCES OF
THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO ARE THEMSELVES IN QUES-
TION AND THE CASE FOR REHABILITATING TENG HSIAO-PING HAS BEEN
A NAGGING PROBLEM WHICH BECAME MORE VOCAL WITH THE ANNIVERSARY
OF PREMIER CHOU'S DEATH.

THE REGIME HAS ADOPTED IN GENERAL THE IDEOLOGICAL FRAME-
WORK OF "MAO'S REVOLUTIONARY LINE" AND SUPPORT FOR THE "ACHIEVE-
MENTS OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION." IT HAS ALSO RESURRECTED
A TWENTY-YEAR -OLD MAO DOCUMENT" ON THE TEN MAJOR RELATIONSHIPS"
WHICH, WHILE WARNING OF PROBLEMS OF IMPLEMENTATION, CASTS THE
REGIME IN A PRAGMATIC PROBLEM-SOLVING IMAGE, LOOKING TOWARD
PROVIDING A BETTER LIFE FOR THE CHINESE PEOPLE AND A RAPID
DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL. SPECIFIC POLICY
CHANGES HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO APPEAR, BUT THE IMAGE OF FORWARD
MOVEMENT HAS BEEN JERKY AS THE REGIME AS BEEN FORMED TO
RESPOND TO PROVINCIAL PROBLEMS CAUSED BY FACTIONALISM AND PURG-
ING OF THE "GANG'S" SUPPORTERS. HOW THE REGIME IN THIS EN-
VIRONMENT IS ABLE TO BUILD A CONSENSUS AMONG ITS MEMBERSHIP
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AND FORGE AND ACT ON POLICY DECISIONS WILL ULTIMATELY DETERMINE
HOW WELL THE HUA LEADERSHIP GROUP IS ABLE TO MEET ITS CON-
STITUENTS' EXPECTATIONS. END INTRODUCTION.

1. IN THE MONTHS FOLLOWING THE PURGE OF THE "GANG OF FOUR"--
WANG HUNG-WEN, CHANG CHUN-CHIAO, CHIANG CHING AND YAO WEN-YUAN--
BUILDING UP THE IMAGE OF THE NEW LEADERSHIP HAS MEANT FIRST
BUILDING UP THE IMAGE OF THE PARTY CHAIRMAN/PREMIER HUA KUO-
FENG AND THAT OF THE PARTY CENTER AS THE DECISIVE BODY RESPON-
SIBLE FOR MOVING AGAINST THE "COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES." THE
FOCUS OF THE MEDIA WHICH BUILT UP HUA, HOWEVER, ALSO ZEROED IN
ON THOSE AROUND HIM, WITH THE CHOUIST BUREAUCRACY REPRESENTED
BY LI HSIEN-NIEN AND THE PLA REPRESENTED BY YEH CHIEN-YING
MOVING INTO POSITIONS OF PROMINENCE ONLY SLIGHTLY BEHIND HUA.
THIS HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY TRUE FOR YEH CHIEN-YING WHO AS THE
ONLY SURVIVING MEMBER OF THE DECIMATED POLITBURO STANDING
COMMITTEE-PARTY VICE CHAIRMEN RANKS HAS APPEARED IN SIGULAR
FASHION WITH HIS OWN SPECIAL BILLING AND WITH MORE THAN PERFUNC-
TORY PUBLICITY AND AUTHORITY.

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2. THE REGIME INITIALLY WAS THE RECIPIENT OF WIDELY-BASED POPULAR SUPPORT BECAUSE OF THE GENERAL ANTIPATHY TOWARD CHIANG CHING AND HER COHORTS. NEVERTHELESS, THE REGIME HAS BEEN UNABLE TO MOVE RAPIDLY BEYOND THE PURGE OF THE "GANG" AND STEP SMARTLY INTO THE NEW POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC WORLD WHICH THE PEOPLE EXPECTED AND WHICH THE REGIME IMPLICITLY PROMISED. FIRST THERE WAS THE QUESTION OF THE DEGREE OF POPULAR SUPPORT. WHILE THERE WAS A GENERAL DISTRUST OF CHIANG CHING'S AMBITIONS BASED ON THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION EXPERIENCE, A BROAD SECTOR OF MIDDLE-LEVEL AND LOWER-RANKED CADRES THROUGH-OUT THE ADMINISTRATION LOOKED TO CULTURAL REVOLUTION PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES AS THE GUARANTORS OF THEIR CURRENT POSITIONS AND FUTURE ADVANCEMENT.

3. IN ADDITION TO THOSE WHO AT LEAST SYMPATHIZED WITH THE IDEALS WITH WHICH THE "GANG" ASSOCIATED THEMSELVES, THERE WAS
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ALSO A GROUP WHICH HAD MORE OR LESS "JOINED" AS FULL-FLEDGED SUPPORTERS AND FOLLOWERS. CONTRARY TO OUR EARLIER EXPECTA-TIONS AND PERHAPS EVEN TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE CHINESE, THIS GROUP SEEMS TO BE RATHER NUMBEROUS THOUGH ITS ACTUAL NUM-BERS ARE CONFUSED BY MANIPULATION OF THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN TO SETTLE LOCAL GRIEVANCES.

4. REMOVING THE INDIVIDUALS FROM POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE AT THE CENTER SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN RATHER STRAIGHT-FORWARD, BUT IN THE PROVINCES THE QUESTION RAN HEAD ON INTO THE PERENNIAL CONTENTIONS FOR POWER AND INFLUENCE WHICH HAVE PLAUGUED PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS REGULARLY FOR AT LEAST A DECADE. IRRESPECTIVE OF CENTER PLANS TO LIMIT THE SCOPE OF PURGES AND TO ALLOW THE "CONFESSED" TO RESTART A NEW LIFE OF SERVICE TO THE NATION, THE DESIRE TO "SETTLE SCORES" APPEARS TO HAVE FRUSTRATED, AND IN SOME CASES PARALYZED, LOCAL ADHERENCE TO CENTER POLICIES. AND, IN AT LEAST THREE CASES (HONAN, HOPEH, AND FUKIEN) THIS PROBLEM HAS RESULTED IN THE PLA BEING CALLED IN TO SETTLE BOTH SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF UNREST AND TENSION AND GENERAL CADRE INACTIVITY AND PARALYSIS (HK 329).

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INFO USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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5. ALTHOUGH THE CENTER'S LEADERSHIP PICTURE REMAINED BASICALLY UNCHANGED IN THE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE PURGE OF THE "GANG OF FOUR," THERE CONTINUE TO BE NAGGING DOUBTS ABOUT SOME OF THE LEADERS AND THEIR INTER-RELATIONS IN THE NEW REGIME. WHILE WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF A GENERAL REVIEW OF THESE PERSONALITIES AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE HUA REGIME, SUFFICE IT TO SAY FOR THE PRESENT THAT THESE DOUBTS INVOLVE THE LEADERSHIP ROLES OF WU TEH, WANG TUNG-HSING, LI TEH-SHENG, AND CHEN HSI-LIEN WHO REPRESENT ONE-THIRD OF THE ACTIVE POLITBURO FIGURES WHO SURVIVED THE OCTOBER PURGE. THE CENTER'S INABILITY OR UN-WILLINGNESS TO MOVE TOWARD NEW APPOINTMENTS TO FILL FACANCIES IN EVEN THE LESS-SENSITIVE STATE COUNCIL MINISTERIAL LINEUP AT THE RECENT NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS (NPC) SESSION APPEARS INDICATIVE OF A DIVISION WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP OVER POWER AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

6. KEY TO THIS DIVISION OF POWER IS THE CASE OF THE FORMER
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VICE CHAIRMAN/VICE PREMIER TENG HSIAO-PING WHO FELL FROM GRACE AFTER PREMIER CHOU'S DEATH IN JANUARY 1976 AND WHO WAA DIS-MISSED FROM OFFICES IN APRIL AFTER THE TIEN AN MEN INCIDENT. TENG'S REHABILITATION AND THE CALL TO REINTERPRET THE "COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY" INCIDENT HAS BEEN A PRIME FOCUS OF THE RECENT COMMEMORATIONS OF CHOU EN-LAI'S DEATH AND THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN SIGNS OF AN ANTI-HUA CAMPAIGN CRITICIZING HIS "USURPATION OF POWER" IN SEVERAL PROVINCES. AS A DIRECT BENEFICIARY OF TENG'S FALL (REFTEL A), HUA'S POWERBASE IS PUT INTO QUESTION AND HIS

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INFLUENCE WILL LIKELY FLUCTUATE RELATIVE TO THE POSITION IN WHICH TENG RETURNS. WITH A PUBLIC OUTCRY ALSO IN TENG'S FAVOR, PROSPECTS FRO TENG'S ULTIMATE LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE LEADERSHIP HAVE BEEN HEIGHTENED AND HUA IS LIKELY AWARE THAT A TENG WHO RETURNS VINDICATED A SECOND TIME WILL BE A DIFFICULT MAN TO RESTRAIN, EVEN IF THERE IS BASIC AGREEMENT BETWEN THEM.

7. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN AN APPARENT CONTINUING UNCERTAINTY OVER THE POWER RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE TOP LEADERS AND ALSO BETWEEN THE CENTER AND THE PROVINCES, THE REGIME'S COMMITMENT TO POLICIES APPEARS MORE READILY DEFINABLE. OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE IS THE REGIME'S ATTENTION TO THE PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOOD AND WELFARE. AT THE OCTOBER 24 PEKING RALLY, THE REGIME TOOK UP A MAO QUOTATION--"A POLITICAL SITUATION IN WHICH THERE ARE BOTH CENTRALISM AND DEMOCRACY, BOTH DISCIPLINE AND FREEDOM, BOTH UNITY OF WILL AND PERSONAL EAST OF MIND AND LIVELINESS"-- AND ADOPTED IT AS A THEME.

8. PROMOTING PRODUCTION BECAME A MAJOR TENET OF THE REGIME AND THE RELEASE OF CHAIRMAN MAO'S 1956 THESIS "ON THE TEN MAJOR RELATIONSHIPS" LINKED THE REGIME'S DESIRES TO CREATE PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR CHINA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITH A MAO PHILOSOPHICAL BASE THAT COULD BE INTERPRETED TO JUSTIFY MOST ANY POLICY. SPECIFICALLY, THE REGIME INITIATED A NEW TACK ON FOREIGN TRADE WITH A REALISTIC APPROACH TOWARD SELECTIVE BUT WIDE-RANGE TRADE CONTACTS AND TRADE EXPANSION. IN ADDITION, THE CONCLUSION OF THE REGIME'S SECOND NATIONAL LEARNING FROM CONFIDENTIAL

TACHAI CONFERENCE PROMISED RENEWED ATTENTION TO AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION AND THE HOPE OF A NEW INDUSTRIAL WAGE PACKAGE APPEARS TO BE WIDESPREAD.

9. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS ATTENTION ACROSS-THE-BOARD TO CENTER CONTROL AND DISCIPLINE, THE REGIME PROMISED NO RELAZATION OF CONTROLS IN THE CULTURAL FIELD. A NUMBER OF WORKS FROM THE PRE-CULTURAL REVOLUTION PERIOD WERE REVIVED AND RESTAGED ACROSS THE NATION, AND STEREOTYPES IN THE LITERARY AND ART FIELD SEEM TO BE WEAKENING. THE PRE-CULTURAL REVOLUTION USE OF THE COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAM AS A MEASURE OF AN INCOMING STUDENT'S POTENTIAL HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS "GOOD", THUS TURNING THE EDUCATION FIELD MORE TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATED, RATHER THAN JUST POLITICALLY CONSCIOUS, YOUTH. ON THE MILITARY SIDE, THE MILITIA'S ROLE HAS BEEN REDEFINED TO FOCUS ON A NATIONAL DEFENSE FORCE AND A "SHOCK FORCE" FOR PRODUCTION MISSION WITH PLA DOMINANCE AND CONTROL MORE FIRM. MILITARY MODERNIZATION, WHICH PERSISTED THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD OF "GANG OF FOUR" INFLUENCE AT THE CENTER, HAS ALSO BEEN GIVEN FURTHER ATTENTION.

10. MUCH OF THE REGIME'S POLICY COMMITMENT HAS BEEN VOCAL

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AND COSMETIC RATHER THAN SUBSTANTIAL AND THE SHIFTS WHICH
HAVE APPEARED IN THE POLICY FIELD HAVE BEEN ONES WITH RELATIVELY
LOW CONFRONTATION LEVELS AND WHICH IN PART REVERSED POSITIONS
WHICH WERE ASSOCIATED WITH THE "GANG OF FOUR." WHEN THE REGIME
HAS HAD MAJOR CONFERENCES--SUCH AS THE NPC SESSION AND THE
TACHAI CONFERENCE--THE RESULTS WERE POLITICALLY MORE RELATED
TO PAST EVENTS THAN TO ANY PROJECTED NEW LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES.
THUS, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF PUBLIC SUPPORT, THE QUESTION
OF LEADERSHIP FOLLOW-THROUGH ON ITS PROMIES WILL BE THE CRITERION
WHICH WILL MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF ITS IMAGE BUILDING.

11. A REGIME WITHOUT A MAO WHO OUTWARDLY COULD COMMAND ABSOLUTE,
UNQUESTIONED ALLEGIANCE AT CRUCIAL TIMES, AND WITHOUT A CHOU
WHO COULD TRANSLATE THE IDEOLOGICAL GOALS OF THE CHAIRMAN INTO
PRACTICAL POLICY WITHOUT DOING HARM TO EITHER IDEOLOGY OR
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POLICY, MEANS A REGIME WHICH IS LIKELY TO BE STARKLY INDIVIDUAL
AND SELF-SERVING. WITH TENG HSIAO-PING IN THE WINGS, THE
POTENTIAL FOR LEADERSHIP STABILITY IS FURTHER DIMINISHED, AND
CONSENSUS ON GENERAL GOALS COULD BREAK DOWN ONCE ACTUAL POLICY
DECISIONS HAVE TO BE MADE ON SPECIFIC PRIORITIES. FAILURE
TO MEET THE HEIGHTENED EXPECTATIONS WHICH THE REGIME HAS HELPED
TO GENERATE CAN ONLY END IN A GRADUAL WEAKENING OF CENTER ABILITY
TO CONTROL THE NATION. THIS ULTIMATELY WILL RESULT INEITHER A
GROWING ASSERTIVENESS BY REGIONAL POWERHOLDERS TO CONTROL
THEIR OWN BAILIWICKS OR AN ASSUMPTION OF THE REINS OF CENTRAL
POWER BY THE ORGANZIED FORCES OF THE PLA.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, POLITICAL LEADERS
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977HONGK00963
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770024-1088
Format: TEL
From: HONG KONG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3524025
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE UA REGIME\'S RECORD: LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE AND POLICY COMMITMENT
TAGS: PINT, PINR, CH, (HUA KUA-FONG)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/10252bd2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009